

## **MEMORANDUM**

May 1, 2003

To: Utah Wildlife Board

From: Kevin Conway  
Director, Utah Division of Wildlife Resources

RE: Wolf Management Working Group

House Joint Resolution 12 was passed by the 2003 Utah Legislature. It directs the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources to draft a wolf management plan for review, modification and adoption by the Utah Wildlife Board, through the Regional Advisory Council process.

At the April 3, 2003, Wildlife Board meeting, the Division was directed to develop a proposal for a Wolf Management Working Group to assist the agency in this endeavor. The Division consulted with a professional facilitator and numerous interest groups in an effort to identify a working group capable of drafting a management plan within the framework established by HJR-12 and the Utah Wildlife Code.

As written in HJR-12, "the United States Fish and Wildlife Service has stated that the presence of wolves in Utah is not necessary for the recovery of wolves in the Northern Rocky Mountain Recovery Area." This being the case, social science will play as important a role as biological science in the management of wolves in Utah. Therefore, the Division proposal includes a representative from Utah State University's Department of Political Science and Department of Natural Resources.

HJR-12 and the Utah Wildlife Code identify numerous interested parties whose views should be considered when developing species management plans. In addition to wolf advocates, the Division has identified organizations representing sportsmen, ranchers, local elected officials and the Ute Tribe.

The Division thinks that the working group would benefit from the input of organizations which are neither strong advocates nor critics of wolves. The Division's proposal includes conservation organizations that have expressed an interest in wolves, but have a clear understanding of the numerous challenges and conflicts which must be addressed if wolves are to have a place in Utah.

Consistent with previous working groups, the Division recommends that a member of the Wildlife Board be included in this effort. However, because of the emotions and polarized views which will be present in any discussion relating to wolf management, the Division suggests changes from the structure of the working groups that developed cougar and bear management plans. In these efforts, the working groups included Division and Wildlife Services personnel and were facilitated by members of the working group. The Division recommends that a professional consultant be retained to facilitate the efforts of the Wolf Management Working Group. The Division thinks that Division, Wildlife Services and United States Fish and Wildlife Service personnel should not be members of the working group, but should be present to provide biological facts and technical assistance.

The Division thinks that the proposed working group is well qualified to develop a wolf management plan consistent with the framework established by current federal regulations, legislated directives and the Utah Wildlife Code. In the event that future court decisions or changing regulations alter the existing framework, the Division thinks that the group is balanced enough to adapt to the changes.

## **PROPOSED WOLF MANAGEMENT WORKING GROUP**

### **Utah State University**

College of Natural Resources  
Department of Political Science

### **Wolf Advocates**

Utah Wolf Forum (2)

### **Sportsmen**

Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation  
Sportsmen for Fish and Wildlife

### **Agriculture**

Utah Farm Bureau  
Utah Wool Growers

### **Local Government**

Utah Association of Counties  
Ute Indian Tribe

### **At Large Conservation Organizations**

Utah Audubon  
Utah Wildlife Federation

### **Utah Wildlife Board**

### **Technical Assistance to the WMWG**

Craig McLaughlin, DWR Mammals Coordinator  
Jim Karpowitz, DWR Big Game Coordinator  
Mike Bodenchuck, Wildlife Services  
Laura Romin, United States Fish and Wildlife Service